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A
NARRATIVE
OF
Sir GEORGE ROOKE's
LATE
Voyage to the *Mediterranean*,
Where He Commanded as
ADMIRAL
OF THE
Confederate Fleet.

With a Description of *GIBRALTAR*; and
Observations on the Usefulness and Importance
of that Place; which was Attack'd and Taken
by the said Fleet, and now remains in the
Possession of the Allies.

An Account also of the NAVAL BATTEL
Fought betwixt the *Confederates* and *French King's*
Fleets: With a Judgment of the Event.

In a Letter to a Person of Quality.

L O N D O N:

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in Fleetstreet. MDCCIV.



*A Narrative of Sir George Rooke's late
Voyage to the Mediterranean, &c.*

My Lord,

I Have always taken Pleasure to oblige you, but never obey'd you more willingly than on this Solemn Occasion, wherein you desire to be better inform'd, than you seem to be from the Prints, of the Action and Issue of the late Naval Engagement in the *Mediterranean*.

You may please then to be Inform'd, That in the Opinion of Candid and Disinterested Men; Seamen and others, there has hardly ever been a Sea Battel better, more fairly, and successfully Fought than this; whether we consider the Manner, with respect to the Skill and Seamanship; the Execution, with regard to the Gallantry and Perseverance against such Odds: and in a word, the Event, with respect to the Consequences.

I might Preface my Letter with Remarks on the Behaviour of a certain Faction, by whose Infusion, and the Agency of their Emissaries, &c. in all Publick Places and Assemblies; this happy Action is treated with so much Spight and Detraction; that till their Discretion, Morals, and Conduct shall furnish me with better Arguments in their behalf, than they seem to administer by their Proceedings on this Occasion, I shall think them beneath the Favour of a Reflection, further than shortly to say, That I do them no Injury to conclude from these Appearances,

that such Merit as I wou'd be thought here to commemorate, is not of their Growth, who can act so unaccountably. I will therefore reserve my Censure of such perverse (not to say pernicious) Practice, to a Time of more Leisure to do them Justice; and leaving them to their present Transports on this Prosperous (and to them it seems Vexatious) Event, will proceed to the Matter of Fact of my Narrative; first bespeaking your Attention to some Previous and very Remarkable Passages and Observations by the way.

It is well enough known that Sir *George Rooke* was but poorly Mann'd when he Sail'd from *Spithead*; and 'tis as easy to compute, that what by Death, Sicknefs, &c. after so long keeping the Sea, his Compliment was much diminish'd before he came to Action; I may therefore fairly conclude that the Fleet which he Sail'd with (which was the Majority of the whole that Engag'd) was as weak in Men as the Enemy cou'd wish. And yet with this Fleet, Foul and Disfurnish'd as it was, having been so long off of the Ground, and in want also of many needful Stores, Sir *George Rooke*, after he had safely Landed the King of *Spain*, sail'd into the *Mediterranean*, and made several Attempts on the Coast of *Spain*; and did his utmost to intercept and fight the Count *de Tholouse*, whom he saw and Chac'd several Days, pursuing them to their Port of *Toulon*. But the Enemy being to Windward, and their Ships Clean, as being but just come out of the Ocean, and refusing the Challenge, tho' manifestly Superior in Force, ply'd at length (do what we could) out of Danger. Whereupon Sir *George Rooke* left the Chace, and bore away, and being at length reinforced by Sir *Cloudesly Shovell's* Squadron, he return'd into the *Mediterranean*; where pursuant to the Opinion and Approbation of the Kings of *Spain* and *Portugal* to Attack the Enemy in *Andalusia*, he immediately in prosecution of those Measures, Attempted and Took the strong Town and Fortrefs of *Gibraltar*: An Acquisition of so great Re-

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nown to Her Majesty's Naval Strength in those remote Seas; of so much Disappointment and Mortification to the *Spaniards* (who have always reckon'd that Place (as it truly is) one of the chief Keys of the Kingdom), that should they attempt to recover it in the present weak State of their Army, concurring with the unlucky Circumstances of the *French* King's Affairs, from whom alone their Succours must come, their Frontiers may by such a Diversion be so weaken'd and expos'd, that there is fair probability that Her Majesty and Her Allies on that side may gather such Fruit from that Fortunate Action, as to think it well worth recording among the Articles of Praise and Thanks due thereby to the Merits of the Fleet; and therein principally and justly to the Commander in Chief. For over and above the Benefits I have noted, as likely to accrue by that signal piece of Service; whoever shall weigh the same with Judgment and Impartiality, and hath but ever so little skill in Maritime Business; he will discern that as our Naval War stands (in this Conjunction) circumstanc'd, where the whole Warfare is likely to be Abroad, and our Fleets are to Act at so remote a Distance; to Cruise also on an Enemy's Coast, without a Port to Friend for 4 or 500 Leagues together: I say, he who considers rightly, and views this Success in its true Light, and beholds *Gibraltar* now in our Possession, situate as it were in the Center of our Business, in the very Narrow of the *Streights* Mouth, commanding from Shore to Shore, and awing by our Cruizers all the Intercourse betwixt East-*France* and *Cadiz*, &c. all the Coasting Trade of both Nations, and the whole *French* Navigation into and out of the Ocean: When it shall be remember'd likewise, that by making it a Magazine for all our Naval Stores, our Fleets may there be Supply'd, Clean, Refit, Victual, &c. and be dispatch'd without hardly stirring from their Station, which is the Life of a Cruizing War; where our Sick and Wounded Men also may be commodiously enter-

entertain'd; where our Trading Ships likewise bound up may lye for a Wind, and may take Sanctuary also in times of Distress, either by Weather or the Enemy; and where all the Summer long, which is the Season of Action, when the *Levant* Winds blow almost constantly and with greatest Violence, Ships may ride and lye quiet as in a Calm: In a word, after I have enumerated these Advantages accruing by our Possession of *Gibraltar*, and have told you that I do not talk at Random and without Book, but from my thorough Knowledge of the Place; which I conceive too by the Additions the *French* have made to the Works of that Fortrefs, may with no exorbitant Expence be render'd Impregnable to any Enemy or Power on that side of the World, as being almost so already by Nature: On these Reflections, I say, one may do so much right at least to the Wisdom of human Councils and Foresight, as to conclude, that there will hardly be a Question, but those Princes who are most nearly concern'd, will do their best to preserve it; and where they should fail, such as are better able, and have a present and temporary Interest in the Profit and Honour of its Conservation, will contribute their part towards it. But to do further Right to this Paragraph of my Narrative; *Gibraltar* is, and ever has been deservedly held to be a Place of that Value in the Eye and Estimation of the *Spanish* Nation, and of all the Maritim World, (witness *Oliver Cromwell's* fitting out a Fleet on purpose to attempt the taking it) that the bare Discredit, abstractedly consider'd, of losing it to the Confederates, will be so great a Blemish to the Conduct, and such a Mark of Impotence in the Prince in Possession, and his Ministry, as to operate with good effect on the doubting part of that People; and the taking it such an Acquisition on the Affections, Hopes, and Courage of the Partizans of the House of *Austria* in that Kingdom, that I trust, I shall not be thought impertinently to indulge my Zeal for the Honour of my Country, and the Desert of the

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the Authors of so Reputable an Action, if I allow that Incident also its Weight, among the Ingredients of Merit which compose the History of that Affair. Neither shou'd we in justice omit to note, That the Success of that Memorable Attempt was evidently facilitated by a previous and very fortunate Adventure of Sir *George Rooke's*; who Cruizing with a small Squadron, (much too small for one in his Post) to look after and secure our *Turkey Fleet*, fell in with Two Galeons of 60 Guns each, and Two lesser Ships, bound for *Cadiz* and *Gibraltar*, loaden with Cannon, and all Sorts of Ammunition and Military Stores, for the Supply and Reinforcement of those two Places. Nor wou'd it among sober and discerning Judges be thought Rhetorick rather than Logick, to attempt further to prove with the Evidence of a Demonstration, (if this Discourse wou'd admit of greater Length than I have assign'd it) that but for the Taking of *Gibraltar* there had been no Battel, and consequently no Victory: For the Enemy had been without Reproach, and cou'd have fairly vaunted, That the *French King's Fleet* had effectually perform'd (without bringing it to a doubtful Decision by Hostility) what they were sent to Sea for; namely, to guard by the Reputation only and Terror of that Prince's Naval Power, his Catholick Majesty's Coast and Towns, from the Descents and Insults of the Enemy; and to awe and confirm the People in their Obedience to their New King: But being disarm'd by that Signal Success, of all pretence of Service or Merit on that Article, they knew no better Course whereby to recover their Credit, than to adventure a Battel; wherein they resolv'd wisely, had they but acted as vigorously. For the Argument to fight, was, to recover their Credit, and the regaining of *Gibraltar*; which, in case of Success, must have been the consequence. Their Motive was manifestly their great Superiority in Strength, having Ten Three-Deck Ships at least more than we, and all the concurring Arguments of Incite-

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ment which an Enemy cou'd wish ; such as Fighting on their own Coast, the Remoteness of Ports and Succour to the Confederate Fleet, in case of adverse Fortune ; the Benefit also of such a Number of Gallies as they had, of singular and known Use and Advantage in a Day of Battel in those Seas ; which I shall not forget to note in its due Place.

As these, in short, may be remember'd among the many other Motives and Encouragements which the Enemy had to engage, and which would have blasted them with Infamy shou'd they have refus'd ; so neither shou'd we forget to do Right to that superior Skill and Fortitude of Her Majesty's Subjects on our side, who, under such visible Discouragements, could so deliberately resolve, and gallantly determine, to surmount them. For over and above the great Disadvantage of such a superior Strength, &c. against them, of which both Parties were appriz'd, we on our parts were also conscious of many Wants and Defects, which the Enemy cou'd not so well know ; such as our Fleets being so thinly Mann'd, a great Deficiency also of Stores and Provisions of all kinds, both Naval and Military ; the one the Effect of a long Voyage, the other occasion'd by the great Expence of Ammunition on many Services, such as *Gibraltar*, &c. the Foulness of our Ships also, (a great Hindrance in a Day of Battel) whereby they can neither pursue an Advantage, or avoid a Misfortune ; neither chase with effect, or, being chas'd, shun the danger ; where they cannot keep their Station in the Line as they ought ; gain the Weather-gage when to Leeward, or keep it when to Windward ; and, in a word, where, tho' there might be otherwise a Parity of Strength and every other Circumstance, if there be Sea-room for Fleets to work in, this single Disadvantage to those to whose Lot soever it falls, will, among knowing Men, be deem'd of weight enough to turn the Scale against them. But neither these Arguments of Discouragement,

couragement, and many other frowning Aspects on our Affairs in that Conjuncture, too long to tell (which wou'd have justified the Enemy's Conduct to their Prince and their Countrey, and perhaps to any other Nation but ours, to have refus'd to Engage, had the Case been theirs) cou'd work any effect on our Councils of War in the Confederate Fleet, where it was resolv'd to seek out the Enemy and fight them. But this in Truth (such is the pernicious Force of Faction) was a Resolution in no sort justifiable, should we leave out the Circumstances of the Commander in Chief, in whom it was an Instance meerly of chusing the least of Two great Evils, namely, Whether to Engage with a Brave and Generous Enemy against such Odds, with whom the better he should Perform, the fairer Quarter (in all Events) he was sure to find: Or on the other hand, By refusing (for Causes how justifiable soever by all the Rules of War and Wisdom) to abide the Attacks of an unfair and merciless Enemy at Home; with whom if every conspicuous Degree of that injur'd Gentleman's Merit shall be made a Motive of their greater Despight and Detraction (as I am afraid is but too true,) what less cou'd he apprehend from such Injustice, (in case of any Failure or Misfortune, however Human or Contingent,) but to be Persecuted with the utmost Bitterness and Barbarity?

But as if Victory were become of the Essence of this Auspicious Reign, and Fortune captivated by the Virtues of an Excellent Queen; while the News and our Joy were fresh on the Occasion of the Glorious Success of Her Majesty's Arms by Land, under the Leading of that Incomparable General the Duke of *Marlborough*, we are assured also of a Signal Victory by Sea; which was so much the more so, by how much it was obtain'd under the Disadvantage of so many unpromising Appearances.

I have several Letters and Journals now before me from Flags, Captains, Persons also of Distinction, and Inferior

Officers in the Fleet ; among which diverse Accounts there is nevertheless so perfect a Consent in the Main, that it stamps the Facts therein related with so deep and broad an Impression of Verity, that there is no withstanding the Evidence : Wherefore briefly Collecting a few of the most notable Passages contain'd in those Relations, and fairly and in few Words descanting thereon, it will, I trust, appear to unprejudiced Judges, that I espouse no Party in this Paper, nor Engage otherwise than in the Cause of Truth.

We are inform'd then from the said Papers, &c. That upon the 9th of *August*, the Confederate Fleet standing out of *Tetuan-Bay*, within sight of the High-Land of *Gibraltar*, the *Centurion* made a Signal of seeing the Enemy's Fleet, as their Scouts also did of Ours ; whereupon the Admiral drew the Fleet into a Line of Battel, and in that Posture lay to receive them, they being to Windward, the Wind at East : But it seems they did not think fit then to Engage, for Reasons which I shall presently explain.

The Enemy then not Bearing down, gave the Confederate Fleet the leisure to send for Half of their Marines, which had been left at *Gibraltar*, leaving the other Half with all the Officers of that whole Body, to keep Possession of that Place. The 10th and 11th were spent in plying to Windward, in pursuit of the Enemy, of whom they could have no other Account than what they cou'd gather by the Report of their Signal Guns : But on the 12th they saw them off of *Malaga*, and Bore after them in a Line all that Night, who in the mean time form'd themselves likewise, by the Assistance of their Gallies, into a Line of Battel.

If it be demanded, Why the Enemy persisted to keep his Wind, and avoid coming to Blows all this while ? It may be observ'd, that when they first saw the Confederate Fleet, they were without their Gallies, unless some few : But the Rendezvous of those Vessels being appointed to be at *Velez Malaga*, they ply'd up to that Place, where they found and joyn'd them.

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On the 13th, the Wind being still Easterly, the Confederate Fleet seeing the Enemy to Leeward, Bore down to Attack them, who expected them in a Line of Battel.

On this Article therefore it may be fairly pronounc'd, That however discourag'd, from the Causes already noted, we had the Honour of being the Aggressors, bearing down and frankly Attacking the Enemy ; for being so far to Windward, it was in our Election to Fight or Refuse. Nor wou'd I be thought out of Industry to make here an invidious Remark, if I were not drawn to it by the *French* Vanity, who so very carefully and often in their Prints repeat the Words, *Confederate Fleet*, emphatically to express the Greatness of the Power which they Oppos'd ; namely, the United Strength of the Two Nations ; whereas in Truth, and which I think should not be forgot, a Rear Admiral, with Six of the *Dutch* Ships, were by an Order of the *States-General* call'd away ; where it is observable too, that but Twelve only of their Ships were Engag'd in this Action ; so that it may be with Freedom and Justice declar'd, that it was rather the *English* than the Confederate Fleet which beat the Enemy.

In the Van we are told, That the Enemy acted as out of Countenance on the first Charge, as appear'd by their edging from Sir *Cloudesly Shovell*, after a few Broadsides ; and in less than Four Hours were Beaten from their Post, and fairly ran away, and kept out of the reach of our Cannon.

According to this Fact, if we consider the Author and the Air of Truth with which he tells it, who will question but one Third Part at least of the *French* Fleet was soon Beaten ?

In the Center, where the Enemy's greatest Strength lay, and who were much Stronger there than we, the Battel was hard, long, and obstinately Fought ; where, if Sir *George Rooke* was visibly Inferior in Force at the beginning,

he became much less a Match for the Count *de Tholouse* towards the End of the Day, when several Ships of his Squadron withdrawing out of the Line, left the Enemy at greater Liberty to deal their Fire the more plentifully on him. Nor did they slip the Occasion : For a Flag, (especially an Admiral) never loses those Marks of Respect and Distinction from a Civil Enemy, who even in passing will ever reserve a Salute of a Broadside for a Ship of Quality. While our Admiral lay thus expos'd against so great Odds (tho' he was very gallantly Assisted and Sustain'd by his Seconds, and those who kept the Line near him) ; 'tis manifest that he obstinately preserv'd his Station, endeavouring always to be Abreast of the Count *de Tholouse* ; which Post, how dearly soever Bought and Maintain'd (it being his Duty, and the most Honourable) he therefore chose and Supported to the last, however destitute of all Succors, but from his own Superior Conduct and Resolution. While it will not, I hope, be interpreted an affected Exaggeration of the *English* Fortitude and Seamanship, to observe, that the Enemy during the whole Action was constantly supply'd from their *Fleet* of Gallies (consisting of 24 at the least) (which waited on them, keeping close under their Lee) with every needful thing, such as fresh Men, Stores of all sorts, Ammunition, &c. Which was an Accession of Aid and Strength so remarkable, and of such Consequence on so pressing an Occasion, that the *French* Fleet, thus circumstanc'd, might not be unfitly compar'd to a Town besieg'd, and not being quite surrounded by the Enemies Works, has the benefit of a Gate open, whereby to be supported and supply'd from abroad with every thing necessary to their Defence. And yet this Service, great as it was, was not the most conspicuous which they receiv'd from such a Fleet of Gallies : For of what use were they in forming their Line of Battel, and preserving it entire, when they had not Wind to work their Ships ? How many

ny disabl'd Ships did they tow out of Danger, and consequently prevented their falling into our Hands; and bring into their Station again when they had stopp'd their Leaks, and refitted? How many Ships, when either be-calm'd, or by reason of their being disabl'd in their Masts and Rigging, having lost their Steerage-way, and lying expos'd to be rak'd fore and aft by our Cannon, were succour'd, tow'd about, and reduc'd to a Fighting posture again by those Vessels? How practicable was it for them, by the help of their Gallies, to tow their Fireships on board our main'd Ships, which it seems, and was strange, they had not Resolution to attempt? And how impossible on the other hand was it for us to make use of ours with effect, from the certainty of their being intercepted by the way? How many Shot also did our Ships receive from the Cashee Guns of their Gallies, which are Cannon of the largest size, and are always plac'd betwixt Wind and Water? In a word, to enumerate the Detail of the Advantages which the Enemy enjoy'd from their Gallies, how reasonable and intelligible soever to competent Judges in Maritim Business, might, I fear, seem to others less knowing, (which are much the majority) rather an Affectation to write a Panegyrick on the *English* Gallantry, than a plain Narrative of Truths of Fact; such as being faithfully deliver'd and fairly apply'd, might enable the most vulgar Capacity to make a Judgment of the Merit and Behaviour of the Combatants, and of the Event on this arduous Occasion.

Let me therefore further briefly note, That the Enemy out-number'd us in Men by at least 15000, which difference was two third parts of the whole Compliment of the Confederate Fleet: In Ships of Battery, namely, of Three Deck Ships, they exceeded us by Ten at least; a Superiority of such moment, that allowing us to have been on an equal foot in every thing else, was more than enough

nough to have given them the Victory. In Guns they exceeded us by computation 500 at least, and these of the highest natures; an Inequality also of no little Consequence in such a Fleet.

In a word, if this Tale be truly told, and the Ratiocination on the Circumstances and Incidents in the main shall appear sound, perspicuous, and unstrain'd, what Judgment would a sober knowing Man make of the Issue of a Battel to be Fought betwixt two Powers so unequally match'd? Could he Prophesie other than Confusion and Destruction to that Party, who in despite of so many forbidding and foreboding Arguments to avoid an Engagement, should nevertheless determine, not only not to refuse to Fight, but chose to seek out and attempt the Enemy? And if by the Computation which has been made, it would be thought very strange if we were not beaten, how much short of a Miracle would it be deem'd to win the Day? Which whether we did or no, may be seen by a few further Observations.

I take notice then from the Letters and Papers before me, that the Enemies whole Line edg'd away from the *English* Fleet from the beginning of the Battel.

What may be unaffectedly collected and judg'd from this Observation, is, that such edging away was a plain Confession of the superior Mettle and Behaviour of the Confederate Fleet throughout the whole Line, which forced the Enemy to give Ground, and forsake the place of Battel; which consequently we possess'd, and which by Land would amount to the Reputation of a Victory. And tho' it should have appear'd in every other Article to have been a drawn Business betwixt the two Fleets, this Advantage alone, had it fallen to the Enemies Lot, would in all probability have produc'd something more than a bare *Te Deum* at *Paris*; since they can so mock the Truth of Divine Providence as to Celebrate that Service with a Lie,

Lie, as it is plain they have done for their Victory over the Confederate Fleet.

I further observe, That after Sir *Cloudefly Shovel* had beat the Enemies Van, not only out of their Line, but out of the reach of his Cannon, he back'd astern, and like a good and gallant Officer endeavour'd to reinforce the Admiral, who, by reason of several Ships retiring out of the Line of his Division, had his Hands full enough. This Act, both of Mettle and good Seamanship, had two useful Effects ; first it drew several of the Enemies Ships from our Center, (which was so hard press'd by a great Superiority both of Strength and Number) and in short drove them at length out of the Line ; for after they had felt the Force of this Supply from some of the Ships of Sir *Cloudefly Shovell's* Division, which were Astern of him, they found it not safe to advance along his Broadside, but being Clean and better Sailers, they set their Spritsails, and with their Boats ahead, Tow'd from him, without giving him the Opportunity of exchanging a single Broadside with them: These were the Vice Admiral of the White, and the Rear Admiral of the White and Blue, and part of their Divisions. Now till competent Judges shall determine the difference betwixt Towing and Standing away out of the Reach of our Cannon, and downright Running away ; I think I may safely abide by the latter Construction. Nor do I think it worth a single Remark in their Favour, to have it said, That they afterwards pelted at some of our small Ships that were a-head.

The Van, and part of those Flags and Ships which composed the Body of the *French* Fleet, we have seen Defeated ; or if you please, Leaving, or Losing, or being Driven from their Station, and Shunning to Engage with any Ships of Countenance of the Confederate Line ; which is Tantamount.

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Let us now see what becomes of their Center, Fortify'd and Dignify'd as it was with the most and best Ships, the greatest Officers for Quality, Experience, and Courage, plac'd as Counsellors to be near and assisting to the young Admiral, who being the King's Favourite Son, there was nothing wanting to be sure which Art, or Skill, or Power, could contribute to his Security, Conduct and Encouragement. Why truly he shar'd at length the like Fate with the rest; nor can it be gainsaid, (for I have the Testimony of a Cloud of Witnesses to vouch it) that (tho' to his Honour it was long first, but more to the Praise of his and their singular Merit who compell'd him) he was oblig'd to tow out of Danger; and if I may use the freedom to speak out, left Sir *George Rooke* possess'd of the Field of Battel.

The Rear of both Fleets pelted at one another somewhat later, but Night coming on gave a Period to their Dispute also.

I have the Opinion likewise, of more than one great Officer for my Voucher, That had not the Center of the Confederate Line been so weaken'd by the loss of the Service of those Ships, which through the want of Ammunition were forc'd to leave their Station (tho' to their Honour they stood long the Mark of the Enemy's Shot, when they had none or very few to Return them) the Count *de Tholouse* had taken his leave much sooner.

If there should remain room after what hath been deliver'd, to doubt of the Certainty of the Victory of the Confederate Line, it may be presum'd that the Sequel will suffice with fair Judges, to vindicate that Truth. For the next Day the Wind coming about Westerly, the Enemy had the Weathergage, when it was purely and only in their Election to have renew'd the Dispute, being not above a League off, and were expected by the Confederates in a Line of Battel. But far from intending to Engage,
they

they tow'd all their lame and disabled Ships to Windward, and plying away with their whole Fleet from us, were before Night got near Three Leagues off. The next morning, which was the 15th, it was a dead Calm; but before Noon the Wind springing up Easterly, the Admiral made Sail, bearing down in a Line towards the Enemy, who edg'd away as fast as their lame Ships wou'd give them leave, preserving, as well as they cou'd, their Line of Battel: But despairing of getting so near them, as to be able to renew the Engagement before it was Night, they being Two Leagues off at Four a Clock, he brought to; which the Enemy observing, did the like, towing in and covering their disabled Ships.

In this Posture the Confederate Fleet lay the whole Night, in full perswasion that the Enemy (by the Countenance they made) wou'd have kept also their Station; but the *Levant* freshning, it seems (as it was afterwards found) they had ply'd away to the Eastward all Night; for in the Morning they were neither to be discover'd by our Fleet nor our Scouts, which were sent out on all Quarters.

The strongest Conjecture that could be made of this precipitate Motion of the Enemy, was, That they had stood through the Narrow, with a Design to gain the Port of *Cadiz*: But perhaps they were aware, that we being so near them, might prevent their getting safely above the *Puntals*, which wou'd take up some time to compass: And they were in the right; for they would thereby have run the hazard of being attack'd in the *Bay of Bulls*, or *Cadiz*, with advantage; which they knew too was not impracticable; for it had been some Months before determin'd in a Council of War in the Confederate Fleet, to have attempted them there, had they chanc'd to find them in that Station, where some Advices said they were: Wherefore they acted a more

safe and prudent part, by plying to Windward; by which means they were sure to keep clear of us.

The Enemy thus disappearing, it was (as hath been noted) the general Opinion then, that they had taken the benefit of the *Levant* Wind to carry them to the Westward: Wherefore it was resolv'd to return to *Gibraltar*, where the Acquisition of that excellent Post, gave us the first and most seasonable Instance of its Usefulness; for we must otherwise have kept the Sea, without a Port to friend, till our Arrival at *Lisbon* at the nearest.

The Confederate Fleet remain'd at *Gibraltar* a Week, in sight of the Marquis de *Villadarias* in his Camp (where they were assur'd of their Mistake, and that the Enemy had not gone that way; and therefore then concluded, and not till then, that they had ply'd to Windward to gain their own Ports.) Here Sir *George Rooke*, &c. remain'd at their ease to Refresh and Refit, and be enabled to pursue their Voyage to *England*; where they had also an opportunity of confronting the false Reports of the Enemy, who had spread it along the Coast of *Spain*, That the Confederate Fleet was beaten, and half destroy'd; from whence also the Count *de Tholouse* might have been inform'd where we were; who had he been able or willing, had a fair opportunity to have attack'd us with Advantage. This Incident therefore I take to be another Testimony of their having been well beaten. And if we may compute from their own Papers, wherein they record so many Persons of Distinction in their Fleet to be kill'd and wounded, and compare that Loss with ours of Men of the like sort; considering too how well Mann'd they were (the Count *de Tholouse* himself having no less than Fourteen Hundred Men in his own Ship) it would be no extravagant Reckoning, to believe their Loss of Private Men to be Fourfold at least greater than the Confederates.

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The Enemy being thus plainly beaten out of the Sea, and seeking Sanctuary in their own Ports, while their Prints and Gainsayers, which may be deem'd to be the Losers, have leave to speak their pleasure to the contrary ; I take notice , that while Sir *George Rooke* remain'd at *Gibraltar*, he kept out his Cruizers, which stood as high up as *Cape Malaga*, without gaining the least Intelligence of the Enemy ; and after he had Refitted, and succour'd and supply'd that Place with Men , Provision of Victuals , and such Stores of War as the Fleet afforded ; leaving also a good Squadron under the Command of Sir *John Leake* to Cruize in those Seas, he made the best of his way home, and as we are told, is arriv'd at *Spithead*, without the Loss of a single Ship in the whole Course of his Long Voyage.

Having thus far endeavour'd to gratify your Lordship with the most exact Accounts I have been able to gather ; with some Observations by the way, from Letters, Journals, and Discourse, of the Transactions of this Naval Campaign ; I shall briefly (as I may be able) resolve some few of the chief Queries of your Lordship's, concerning the whole Conduct of the Voyage, &c. For there are some which for their Nature are too great for a Private Man to meddle in, and others too difficult for my Skill to determine. For your Lordship has ask'd Questions, and form'd Objections so just and curious, that to be well answer'd wou'd amount to a *Critick* on the whole Proceeding at Home and Abroad.

You observe, that the *French*, and all Foreign Prints from *December* last agree, That the Enemy were Equipping and Fitting out their whole Naval Force, both at *Toulon* and in the Ocean ; and that the most moderate made them to amount to Sixty Sail of the Line ; that

these, when joyn'd, were to compose a Fleet for the ensuing Summer's Service ; but whether in the Ocean or *Mediterranean* remain'd doubtful. Your Lordship further says, That it is well known, to what a Formidable Strength the *French* Naval Force is grown ; having at this day no less than Thirty Three-Deck Ships in their Navy ; which, for Quality, Strength, and excellent Built, do equal, if not surpass, all other Nations, the *English* not excepted. On this Intelligence and Observation, you form this Query, *viz.* How it came to pass that Sir *George Rooke* sail'd from *England* with so small a Fleet, and with so few Three-Deck Ships ; who, early or late, either in the Ocean or *Mediterranean*, might be morally certain to have to do with the Enemy ; who having so many Capital or Three-Deck Ships, as wisely knowing their Worth in a Line of Battel, and of which the Count *de Tholouse* gave a good Instance, by turning out the Intendant at *Toulon*, for not having more of that Sort ready when he arriv'd ? Nor could they be thought to act so inconsistently, as, when they had fitted them for the Sea, to leave them at home, when they had a Design of that Magnitude in their View, as the Keeping and Confirming the Possession of *Spain*, (their Darling Acquisition) and consequently the *Spanish Indies*, to their New King.

To this I answer, by way of Apology, and according to Appearances, (for I am not privy to any Counsels or Debates) That, in the first place, Sir *George Rooke* was going a Winter's Voyage, his Business at that time being no other than to Transport the King of *Spain* into *Portugal* : Nor was the Fleet with which he Sail'd, beneath the Dignity of the Service on which he went : For to adventure such a Fleet into the Ocean at that Season, will, I am persuaded, be deem'd by knowing and thinking Men, a passionate and magnificent

nificent Expression of Her Majesty's Friendship. 'Tis true, the Ship which Sir *George Rooke* commanded, and where the King was, tho' She had Three Decks, was Inferior in every respect to most of her Rank or Rate; but She was chosen for the sake of her Name, in Compliment perhaps to *Queen Catherine*, our Queen Dowager, and present Regent of *Portugal*. She was also under-gunn'd, her Lower Tire being but 24 Pounders; but She became by that means so much the more jocund and wholsome in the Sea; whereby the King was carry'd better at his Ease; for they expected in their Voyage outward-bound, to have little other Occasion for their Guns, but in Salutes: Nor do I make any difficulty, to think your Lordship judges justly, when you say, You cannot believe that Sir *George* ever expected to fight a Battel in that Ship.

Wherefore, your Demand goes further, requiring a Reason, why, when it was thought fit to reinforce Sir *George Rooke's* Fleet, to oppose so great a Power as was known to be forming against him; was not Sir *Cloudesly Shovell* sent with Better and more Proper Ships, and greater Force? Why not the *Sovereign*, or *Britannia*, or Both, and more Second Rates, to be a Match in a Line of Battel; that is to say, to have an equal Battery or Number of Guns in the same Length of the Line, to encounter the great Ships of the Enemies: For there was no room left for doubt at that time, but one Third Part of their Fleet at least, wou'd consist of Ships of that Sort. You say also, that there was nothing then to fear from the Enemy in the Channel; and the Prize for which they were likely to contend, was, in effect, no less than the whole *Spanish* Monarchy; and consequently the Success and Event likely to be of the greatest moment.

of any that has been disputed at Sea, since the Battel of *Actium*, which is above Seventeen Hundred Years ago.

To this Part of your Lordship's Question, I will give the best Answer I can. In order to which, I think, it may be fairly first ask'd, Whether or no Sir *George Rooke* demanded other Ships, and a better Reinforcement, than what he knew was coming out with Sir *Cloudefly Shovell*? If he did not, and found the Want of them when he came to Action, it shou'd seem to me an Omission; for which, however, he may be said to have sufficiently atton'd by his Behaviour (tho' well reprov'd for his Mistake) in the Day of Battel. But if he demanded better Supplies, and other Ships than those which were sent him, I can readily yield my belief, that there seem'd to be better Reasons given, (if it came to be the Subject of a Debate) why he was not, than why he ought to have been better Supply'd. And while Matters of State of that Magnitude are too deep for me to wade in, I will conclude this Article, by adventuring for once to utter a Bold Truth, but no more than what occurs to every observing Man to know; That, let it have been by whose Counsel it will, which prevail'd to have that Affair decreed as it was, and let the Issue have been never so Fatal; I can most readily consent, that he or they, be they few or many who gave it, spoke from their Hearts, and acted Honestly and Sincerely therein: Nor wou'd I have One or Ten *Englishmen* suffer Reproach for the Guilt of a whole Nation; to whom it is given (the Frailty of a proud and over-weening People) never to be perswaded but they are too strong, till they are beaten into a Belief, that they are too weak for an Enemy.

Your

Your Lordship's next Demand, is, Why we did not fight the Enemy nearer than Half Cannon Shot off? To this Question, Sir *George Rooke's* Letter, which is printed, gives the best Answer: To which I presume to add, what I have also learn'd from good Authority; That the *Admiral's* General Orders were, not to fire till they came within Pistol-Shot of the Enemy; who, it seems, observing (or thinking they did) some Movements in our Van, which gave them hopes of Weathering a good Part of our Line; instead, therefore, of staying to receive us, their whole Fleet fill'd at once, by a General Signal from the *Count de Tholouse*; and endeavour'd (as being clean, and consequently out-sailing us) by stretching a-head, to hit that seeming Blot: Of which Sir *George Rooke* being wisely aware, challeng'd the *French* Admiral by a Gun or Two out of his Chace to stay for him; which he not regarding, gave that early Occasion for the Signal of Battel; which was the single and evident Cause for beginning the Engagement at that Distance; though during the Action they were often within Pistol-shot, and sometimes Board and Board. This wise and ready Step of the Admiral, had the good effect of frustrating the Enemy's Purpose, by obliging them to surcease that Pursuit, and betake them to their Defence. And here I might appeal to Seamen, who only are competent Judges, and will therefore be able to determine whether the Enemy or no was fought near enough; when it is most certain that there scarce came a Shot into the Admiral's Ship and his Seconds, &c. (many of which were 42 Pounders) which did not go through and through; which in the Science of Gunnery is always call'd Point-blank distance. But, by consulting the Papers and Accounts before me, it appears most evident,

evident, That in the Prosecution of the Battel, the Enemy would never permit the *Confederate* Fleet to fight them so near however, as they were always willing, but constantly edg'd away, the harder they were prefs'd.

Your Lordship next requires a Reason for our Fleet's Want of Ammunition towards the end of the Day. On which Article you animadvert judiciously, but severely; insomuch that I cannot resolve you fully, with that Decency which becomes me. For if I were dispos'd to exaggerate at all, I should chuse to do it on the Subject of their Praise (which indeed surpasses all Exaggeration) who by their incomparable Skill and Manhood cou'd wrest Victory out of so many Difficulties and Impediments in their way; whereof that was one. Wherefore let him, whosoever he may be, if a Man of Knowledge especially, who shou'd be dispos'd to censure that Accident with Aggravation, lay first his Hand on his own Heart, and resolve if he wou'd not have been proud of the Imputation of being found in want of Ammunition, after the Expence of Sixty Broadfides, in a continual Battery against an Enemy so much more than his Match in Force, for Nine Hours together. Nor need I scruple to say, on the Subject of this Question, That if there shou'd be found a Man of a Mind perverse enough to be bias'd to another Opinion, I shou'd be inclin'd to think, That had he been in place (whatever other Virtues he might want) wou'd be found Supply'd with Discretion enough at least to have Powder and Ball to spare; or otherwise to obviate the Want of it, by a wiser way than our present Combatants knew.

But my Lord, lest my Letter shou'd swell to a Book, I will reserve my Answers to many of your excellent Questions, to the Opportunity (which I hope soon to enjoy)

joy) of Kissing your Hands. Wherefore making brief mention only of some Matters fit to be remember'd, which cou'd not so well stand in the Narrative, I will put an end to your present Trouble.

It seems worth noting, That the *French* Papers lay very emphatically the Use of Bombs to the Confederates Charge, during the Battel; when, 'tis most certainly a Fable; all our Bomb-Vessels being left at *Gibraltar*. Wherefore, if, according to their Accounts, several of their Chief Ships were disorder'd, and driven out of the Line, by a bare Apparition of those Terrible Machines; what may it be deem'd they wou'd have done, (tho of no manner of use) had they been really and truly there? But while such Trifling may be reckon'd among their lame Excuses for Running away, it is a true Evidence, however, under their own Hands, that they did so, and therefore it is no Injury to record it.

It may be further remark'd, That among the Accounts which they publish, for their keeping the Wind, and plying to the Eastward after the Battel, which is equally Slight and Fabulous; was, to find out and attack our *Turkey* Fleet; being willing to have it understood, that we had been forc'd to desert them, and leave them to the Mercy of the Enemy. But the knowing World will judge as they ought of such frivolous Falshoods; who are enough appriz'd, that neither We, nor the *Dutch*, have at this day any such Fleet, nor one single Man of War, in the *Mediterranean*; unless Sir *John Leake* be gone thither; and that Monsieur *de Tholouse* did not remain (as their *Gazettes* pretend) Master of the Field of Battel, but was Sail'd rather to seek Safety and Sanctuary, than Purchase. Had it been otherwise, his Honour, and his Duty, wou'd have sent him on another Errand, more for the Reputation and Service of his Prince.

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Who

Who will not therefore be dispos'd, from this Observation also, to conclude, That the *French Fleet*, by making the best of their way Home, was beaten into that Resolution? But why should I be thought to strain my Subject, with gathering more Proofs of the Certainty of the Victory of the Confederate Fleet?

I come now, lastly and briefly, my Lord, to those few General Queries which your Lordship makes; being such as seem to be suggested to you, from your judicious Remarks on the whole Series of the Confederates Proceedings; which I shall resolve, as I may be able; conscious the while of my Insufficiency to please you; who wanting no Penetration in the Subject-Matter, as having convers'd in the Sea, and are so delighted with the Conversation of Seamen; that I almost doubt, you ask Questions rather to pose me, than to be inform'd your self. First, you demand, Why Three-Deck Ships are become so much in Vogue? And ask, If a Two-Deck Ship of 80 Guns be otherwise of less Value, than a Three-Deck Ship of 90 or 100, than what may be computed singly and meerly from their different Force; namely, the Number of their Guns? To which I answer, That, I conceive, it is not in the Power of Art to make a good 80 Gun Two-Deck Ship; while every Clumsy Artift, with a small Share of Judgment, can build a good Three-Deck Ship. Wherefore, not to enter too far into the Reasons, in this place, I observe, That a great Two-Deck Ship, such as have been of late introduc'd in the Navy, is in Fact, a Masterless, Unwholsome, and Laboursome Beast; which works and racks her self to pieces in the Sea, and so much the more, the heavier Guns She carries: While a Three-Deck

Deck Ship, of the very same Dimensions, is Wholesom, Governable, and Easy; makes much fairer Weather in a Storm, is quieter at an Anchor, can carry more and heavier Cannon; fight more at her Ease, and with more Security to the Men; and is consequently so much a better Man of War: All which good Qualities, are obtain'd purely by the Addition of a Deck. A Two-Deck Ship, in time of warm and close Action, which carries the better Half of her Force aloft; has not only her Men so much the more expos'd to Small Shot; but, what with the Fragments of Ropes, Rigging, Blocks, Splinters of Masts and Yards, &c. which fall from over-head by the Enemies Shot, their Guns on the Upper-Deck, &c. are so pester'd and incumber'd, and the Men so hinder'd and discourag'd in their Business, that they can neither work their Ship, nor ply their Guns as they ought; which are by that means often become useless in the greatest Heat of Action: All which Evils, I say, are redress'd, or not so much felt in a Three-Deck Ship. To which I add, (which is no small Article in our Naval Expence and Oeconomy) That the same Ship with Three Decks; *viz.* a Ship of the same Size for length and breadth with one of Two Decks; does with all these Superior Qualities, Sail and Subsist in the Navy with the same Charge of Wear and Tear to the Publick, with the other; or the Difference is so small as not to be worth the mention. If a few more of such Ships as these then were wanting to compleat our Advantage, (as able Judges who were in the Action think) and the Enemy escap'd away as they did, without any visible or great Loss of their Ships, &c. (which is no essential Ingredient in the Certainty of Victory); While we may ask leave without Offence therefore to regret the want of such a Reinforcement, we may be

bold to take it with assurance, to recommend the Behaviour of Her Majesty's Subjects, who could purchase such Honour to Her Naval Power at that remote Distance as to beat so Strong, not to say Insolent an Enemy, with the greatest part of her Great or Three-Deck Ships laid up at home in her Ports or her Docks.

Your Lordship next demands my Opinion about the Nature of our Cannon now in use in the Navy. To which I answer, That of late (I cannot conjecture why) we have fallen into the Use of Cannon of Foreign kinds, such as 24 Pounders, 12 Pounders, and the like; which are not of the *English* Natures; ours being all superior, or above the Cannon of other Nations, according to their respective degrees: For our Cannon-Royal, or whole Cannon, carry a Ball of 63 Pound, but the *French* whole Cannon rise no higher than to carry a Ball of 42 Pound, which we call Cannon of Seven, or Bastard Cannon. Our Demi-Cannon carry a 32 Pound Ball; the *French* Demi-Cannon is no higher than a 24 Pounder, and so in proportion downward. Since our Great or Three-Deck Ships therefore are or may be made the strongest and best Men of War in the World; we having much the best Materials for that Use, why also shou'd they not carry Cannon of Size in proportion to their ability to bear, and thereby surpass our Neighbours in both, as by Ancient Establishment was provided? Nor do I believe that it is beyond the Memory of Man, when the *Royal Sovereign* in her old Built, had some Whole or Cannon-Royal, viz. of 63 Pound Ball, on her Lower Gun Deck. I confess I was long unresolv'd betwixt the use of Cannon of Seven, and our Demi-Cannon, for the Lower Gun Decks of our great Ships: But when I was assur'd that the *French* us'd Cannon of Seven, I thought the Question was then out of sight. For to think that a Two-Deck Ship, in a constant Battery,

tery, fighting at a due distance in a Line of Battel, is a Match for a Three-Deck Ship ; or that a Ship carrying smaller Guns, can equal another of higher Natures, is to maintain a Paradox, which no judicious Man, how brave soever, wou'd be able to prove. And yet perhaps some of our inferior Second Rates wou'd be easier in the Sea and at an Anchor, to be Gunn'd with Demi-Cannon on the Lower Deck, at least Afore the Mast. Nor are we perhaps enough aware, that 'tis not so much the Smartness of the Gun, (as the Term is) but the Weight of the Ball, which performs the Effect, carries it through and through, and does the Execution. 24 Pounders, of which we seem of late to be so fond, are, 'tis true, a yare and nimble sort of Guns ; but they were made and invented for Men worse fed and paid, and of less Strength and Mettle to manage, than the Seamen of the *English* Fleet : Wherefore let *English* Men ply *English* Guns. But they are a Reaching Gun, as they call it: Which I can also frankly allow ; but shou'd be sorry the while to see *Englishmen* make choice of Guns for that Virtue's sake, unless in their Chace, lest they shou'd thereby (for Vice is catching) be taught to fight at a Reaching, that is, at too great, a Distance ; which was not wont to be their Custom, and I hope never to see it prevail.

But 'tis said, That Cannon of Seven drop their Ball much too soon, and you cannot always fight an Enemy at your own distance. This also I can consent to, as having my self observ'd it : But this Evil has an easy Remedy, our Cannon of Seven being Two Foot at least too short throughout the whole Navy ; wherefore let them be cast longer, and they will reach further ; for there is no want of Room on the Lower Gun Deck of a great Ship to house them.

But my Lord, while I am led by your Lordship's profitable and Manly Enquiries into the Noble Subject of the Artillery of the Navy-Royal of *England*, I wou'd not lose the opportunity of revealing to you a solemn Wish of mine on this Argument, and which I have long harbour'd; namely, To see all our Three-Deck Ships mounted with Brass Cannon. The Charge wou'd not be very great, but the Benefit unſpeakable; both for the Ease of the Ships, Quickness of Fire, and Safety of the Men; Brass Cannon being lighter for the Seamen to work, and for the Ships to carry; safer than Iron, as not flying and breaking in pieces when hot with quick firing, as the others are apt to do; and may consequently be us'd longer, *viz.* when their Metal is more heated than Iron, wherefore much fitter for Service. Brass Cannon are also more durable, as not rusting and decaying as Iron Guns do, which in Thirty or Forty Years grow useless, and the Metal of little worth; while Brass Guns, when made by any Accident unserviceable, may be recast out of the same Metal, &c.

In Conclusion; It should be the Subject of every hearty *Englishman's* Sorrow, to see a Neighbour-Prince out-do us, as, I fear, he does, in so many Noble, Naval Designs and Performances; and, among the rest, in this of Mounting his Great Ships with Brass Guns. God in his Mercy grant, if it does not alarm us, that such a Peal of *French* Cannon at Sea, proves not a Knell to the Glory, Honour, and Safety of the *English* Navy and Nation: Who, while we are Cultivating with so much Vanity and Profusion, our Gardens and Seats of Pleasure; while we live with such Sloth, Luxury, and Expence; leave those Means, which are to a Demonstration in our Power, unimprov'd; whereby to insure the Possession, not of our Superfluities, but our Liberty, &c. For ought I know, it were well worth the Loss of a Battel at Sea, to awaken

ken us, who are not so apt as other Nations to discern Danger at its true distance: Were it otherwise, we shou'd long e're this have obviated an Evil of such a Magnitude so impending; and not, to our Reproach, suffer our selves to be at this day Brav'd (not to say Terrify'd) by a Prince and Nation at Sea, who, within the Memory of Men now living, had not a Man of War of their own in the World. We shou'd not, however, despair, but such a Spur, sharpen'd too with the Sense of our Peril, may incite in us at length an Equal, or Greater, Ardor and Sollicitude for our Preservation, on our Part, than appears to Transport that Aspiring Monarch in the Pursuit of Vain-glory and Ambition, on his; nor is it by boasting and over-weening, but exerting of our Power, which must save us. The Dignity of the Flag, and Dominion of the Narrow Seas, being no otherwise to be maintain'd, than by the exercise of the same Virtue by which they were acquir'd. *I am,*

London, *September,* 1704.

*Your Lordship's most Humble
and Obedient Servant.*

F I N I S.

which they were accustomed to maintain, than by the
 union of the narrow, and by the
 which may save us. The dignity of the flag, and the
 and over-weening, the bearing of our power,
 of vain glory and ambition, on this, not is it by
 are to transport that a single thought, and a single
 and solicitude for our fellow-men, our poor, our
 in us, as in the English, our German, our
 look a Spaniard's too, with the spirit of our
 in the world, a light not shadowed, but
 of their new living, not a sign of their old
 a France and Nation as that who, without
 place to be at this day (not in the future) by
 is commanding, and more, is our Republic, for
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London, Septem.

1801.

The British Museum
 The British Museum
 The British Museum

1801